

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-16, 18-22 and 47, 49-81 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3-16, 18-22 and 47, 49, 50 and 54-81 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and claim 51 is amended. No new matter is added by this amendment, and this amendment is supported fully by the specification. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter the foregoing amendment and reconsider the patent application in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout the prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the Final Rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action indicates that claims 51-53 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

By this amendment, claim 51 is amended to include the features of claims 47 and 48. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 51 and dependent claims 52 and 53 are in condition for allowance. The remaining claims are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

B

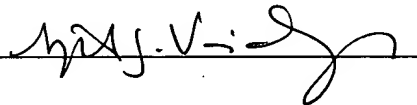
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1349. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 1, 2003

By: 

HOGAN & HARTSON LLP
555 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: 202-637-5777
Facsimile: 202-637-5910
Customer No. 24633

Celine Jimenez Crowson
Registration No. 40,357

Ajit J. Vaidya
Registration No. 43,214

William T. Slaven IV
Registration No. 52,228

